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ABSTRACT

This data system was formulated to analyze school finance issues in New Jersey. It is intended for simulation and analysis of the effects of school finance reform. The system has three components. The first is the data base containing such information as district enrollment, property valuation, or financial information. The second is the aid allocation component that simulates the effects of aid allocation models. The analysis component analyzes the alternative aid allocation models. In the data base component, school districts are classified by socioeconomic factors and community type. The data system uses a data base management system that is flexible and will support a wide variety of analyses. The system is intended to analyze the impact of the present state aid formula; the impact of alternative measures of wealth, effort, or student need; and the impact of alternative state aid formulas. A simulation of alternative methods of taxation will also be possible. A glossary of terms used in the system concludes the report. (Author/JM)

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SYSTEMS DIVISION REPORT

THE NEW JERSEY EDUCATION DATA SYSTEM

SDR.76.45

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Princeton, New Jersey

August 1976

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FOREWORD

This report has been reviewed by Mr. V. E. Wichert, Director, Systems Division. This report is intended for distribution within Educational Testing Service.

ABSTRACT

This report discusses a data base which was constructed for the purpose of analyzing school finance issues in New Jersey. Presented are the organization and content of the data base, a summary of analyses which have been conducted and a consideration of possible future uses of the data base.

THE NEW JERSEY EDUCATION DATA SYSTEM

System Applications

New Jersey is faced with the challenge of designing a new school finance allocation system that provides "the educational opportunity needed in the contemporary setting to equip every younster for his role as a citizen and competitor in the labor market." Not only the legislature and the State Department of Education but interest groups, scholars, and executive and legislative personnel will be involved in planning new revenue raising and distribution strategies to meet this challenge. Yet, the design, monitoring and evaluation of school finance reforms have become increasingly complex in the last decade, with the incorporation of different measure of student need, district wealth and local effort in new finance formulas. Decision-makers are therefore increasingly unable to predict the impact -- on either a statewide or district level -- of those reforms without the aid of computer simulation.

School finance simulations broaden the information available to decision-makers in a number of ways. First, simulations present the fiscal impact of new policies on both state and local budgets by projecting total costs of new aid programs and changes in levels of local district expenditures and tax rates. Second, simulations can be designed to show how changes in school finance formulas meet, or fail to meet, the desired objectives of finance reform. Third, the use of computers enables decision-makers to assess a wider variety of school finance plans, thus increasing the number of policy options available to them. Finally, the simulation produces not only evaluations of alternatives, but creates an in-depth, integrated data base.

A School Finance Data System

To provide assistance in the development of a "thorough and efficient" education system for New Jersey, the Education Policy Research Institute (EPRI) of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) has developed an integrated data base system which provides a responsive, flexible data analysis capability to meet the varied information needs of New Jersey education groups. With the development of the New Jersey Education Data System, EPRI has created a generalized school finance simulation capability with substantial analytical capacity. This system has three components - data base, aid allocation, and analysis - which can be used independently or in conjunction with one another.

The data base contains enrollment, property valuation, and expenditure data at the school district level. In addition, a district by district data base has been developed which includes socio-economic characteristics, a basic profile of teachers, and a collection of data elements on other functions (provided by the associated municipalities). For a list of data elements see the Glossary

This data is then utilized in the aid allocation component of the model. Here, state aid is allocated to specific districts based on the desired parameters. The analysis component provides standard methods of comparing various equalization alternatives to determine the degree of success in meeting specified objectives, such as "fiscal neutrality".

The New Jersey Education Data System can be used to answer a wide variety of educational and tax equity policy questions. The following three

examples are but a few of the ways in which the system may be used to answer policy related issues.

School Finance Simulations. Use of simulations to determine the impact of state aid formulas has become a significant tool of school finance reform in recent years. These simulations provide a basis for judging whether existing and alternative allocation plans meet desired objectives. The New Jersey school finance simulation, for example, has been used to analyze and compare alternatives to the New Jersey school aid formula.

In evaluating New Jersey's system of financing education and in planning for a more equitable state and local education finance program, one should begin with an analysis of the impact of the existing formula. An evaluation of the current law will show, among other things, the range of expenditures per pupil among school districts in the State, the relationship between school spending and local tax rates, and the distribution of different categories of state aid by district.

The second step is to study the problems and characteristics that affect school funding in the state and to create, if necessary, alternative measures of wealth, effort, and student need to be used in the finance formula. Equalized property valuation, school budgets, and student enrollments and classifications are the major determinants of state aid to local school districts in the present New Jersey formula. The concepts measured by these variables -- wealth, effort and need -- could also be represented by other means. For example, the wealth of a particular district could be measured by the median family income, level of poverty in the district, or some combination of property value and income. The New Jersey Education Data

System has been designed to show the relationship between these alternative measures and to evaluate the impact of substituting these measures.

Besides the use of additional or surrogate elements, the New Jersey Education Data System presently will also permit the consideration of alternative school finance formulas -- percentage equalizing, guaranteed valuation, district power equalizing, and foundation programs. The differential impact of these alternative formulas in the distribution of state aid to localities may be analyzed by specifying parameters to determine aid allocation options. Thus, a series of simulations could be generated for differing levels of state expenditures, for differing equalization levels, for differing minimum levels, as well as for many types of hybrid solutions.

School District Profile. Many of the analytic variables which have been included in the data system provide the user with alternative ways of classifying school districts. The Data System includes two classification schemes utilized by the New Jersey State Department of Education Assessment Program -- community type and District Factor Grouping (DFG). Community type is a variable which classifies districts according to their geographic and density characteristics. DFG is a classification of districts utilizing the 1970 United States Census Survey to identify socio-economically similar kinds of districts. Other additional district classification schemes may be developed as well. For example, districts may be classified according to expenditure level, size, a wealth measure such as valuation or income, or need. Alternative allocation plans can thus be viewed as they differentially affect various classes of districts. District classifications can also help

in assessing need or measuring progress when the educational input or output of a district is compared to that of districts in the same or similar classes.

Simulation of Alternative Taxes. The financing of elementary and secondary education is presently shared by the state and local school district. At present, state aid to local school districts in New Jersey accounts for approximately 31 percent of total funds spent on public schools. The property tax serves as the principle tax instrument of local school districts while the state derives the majority of its revenues from the sales and use tax (36.0%), corporate business tax (13.8%) and motor fuel tax (13.1%).[1] For the past several years, the introduction of an income tax or statewide property tax has been on the public agenda as a means of reducing reliance on local property taxes and making the state and local tax system more equitable. The New Jersey Education Data System may be used to analyze questions concerning the distributional impact of different tax structures, and to simulate the behavioral response of local districts to changes in the distribution of state aid.

As we have seen the answering of specific policy questions can be aided by the use of advanced computer technology. However, many computer systems are so complex as to discourage their use by most lay persons. New Jersey Education Data System was designed to combine a large analytic capability with a system that permits the user to specify their needs in their own terms.

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[1] Table 3, 1974 figures Annual Report of the Division of Taxation in the Department of the Treasury, 1974 (p. 10).

System Design

The New Jersey Education Data System uses a flexible data base system, TOTAL, which will support a wide variety of analyses. TOTAL belongs to a class of software packages known as Data Base Management Systems (DBMS).[1] A DBMS provides for the storage and retrieval of data in a standard consistent fashion. Using a DBMS as opposed to conventional sequential file techniques, all data in the data base is accessible to a computer program simply by issuing a series of TOTAL data manipulation language commands. Once data is stored in the TOTAL data base, tedious file matches are no longer required.

TOTAL provides this data management capability by providing a system designed with two types of files. The TOTAL master file provides direct access to data on the basis of a specified data key. For example, the New Jersey Education Data Base has a school district master file. Such data as school district name and district type are retrievable by specifying the school district code number which is the data key in this case. Given this school district code number TOTAL locates the school district record within its files and returns the requested data to the computer programs.

The second file type is the variable entry file. Data contained in this file is retrieved by TOTAL through a linkage path. A linkage path is a set of pointers between a master and a variable entry file. In the New Jersey Data Base enrollment data is stored in a variable entry file. The school district master file contains a pointer which is used to locate the enrollment data for the district which is stored in the variable entry enrollment file.

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[1] TOTAL is a software package, a computer program, purchased by ETS from CINCOM Systems, Inc. of Cincinnati, Ohio

Although there are only two simple file types, complex data structures can be supported by TOTAL. Beyond this support of complex data structures, TOTAL also:

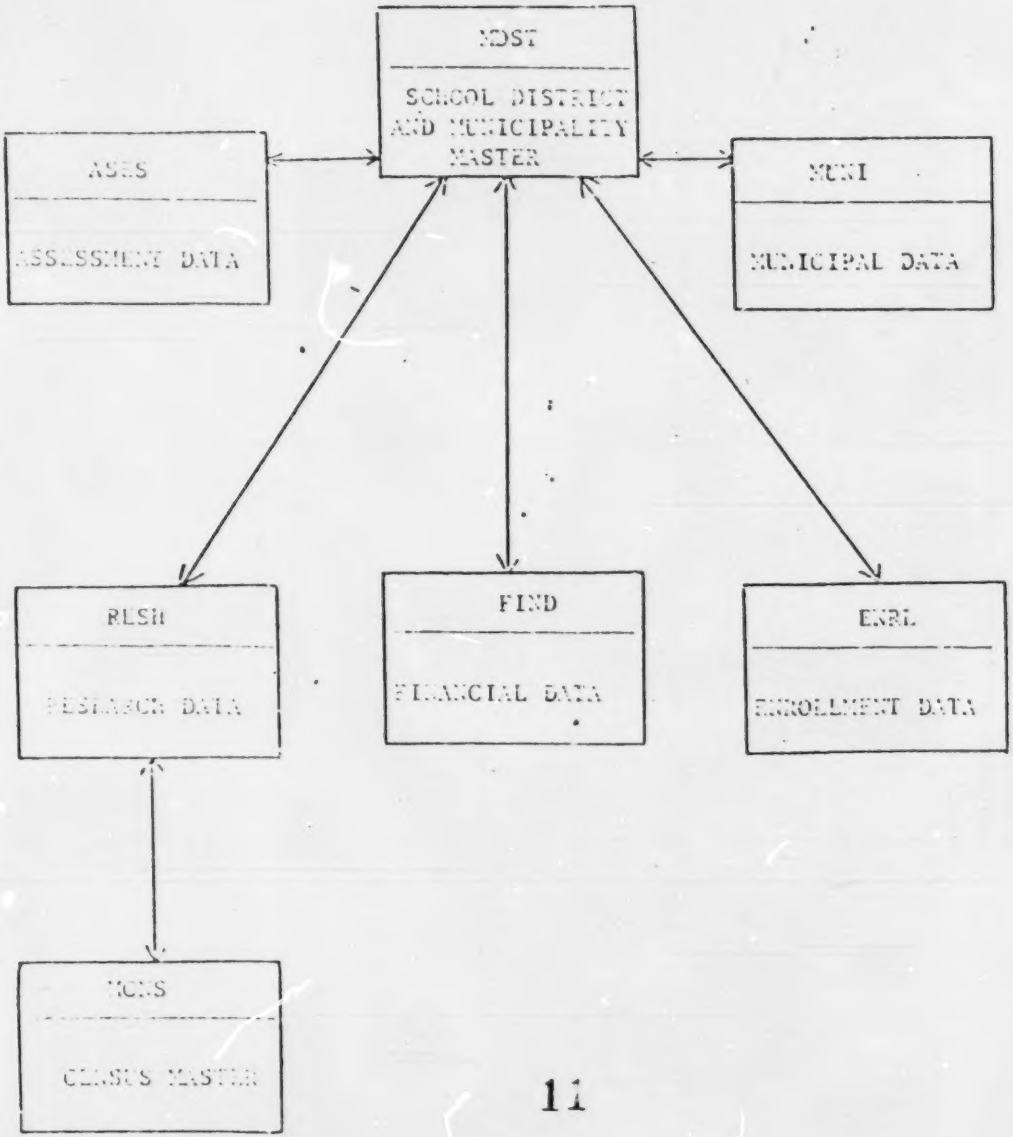
> Deals with data elements, not records. This provides a measure of data independence to programs written to perform simulations or analyses. Data independence lessens the impact of change in the data base on existing programs.
>
> By isolating programs from data, facilitates the growth and dynamic change of the data base which allows the addition of longitudinal data.

For these and other reasons TOTAL was selected to manage data in the New Jersey Education Data Base.

Data Base Organization. Figure I illustrates the organization of the New Jersey Education Data System. Each rectangle represents a different file in the data base. The data content and data sources for each file are described below.

Figure I

ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW JERSEY EDUCATION DATA BASE



School District and Municipality Master File. The school district and municipality master file is shown at the top of Figure I. This file, by the use of TOTAL linkage capabilities provides an index to the financial, enrollment and other data within the Data Base. The basic information in this file, including school district code numbers and names was provided by the School Finance and Auditing Department of the State Department of Education. Where a municipality is not coterminous with a school district because it is a constituent of one or more regional districts, data is included on each component in the data base. Elements such as district type and district plan as required by the Act of 1975 were coded from New Jersey Education Association publications. Finally, municipalities and school districts were cross-referenced. The school districts to which each municipality belongs are identified within the data base.

Research Data File. The research data file contains analytical variables for school districts extracted from the 1969-70 census and teacher related data supplied by the NJEA. A file of school district census data was obtained from the Syracuse University Research Corporation which contains census data aggregated by school district for districts with populations of 2,500 or more.[1] Data elements from the New Jersey State Department of Education's Fall Survey are to be included in the data base.

Enrollment Data File. Enrollment data was obtained from the School Finance and Auditing department of the State Department of Education. Enrollment totals,

[1] See A Data Capability for School Finance Aid Simulations, first revision December 1974, Syracuse University Research Corporation.

such as weighted and unweighted totals were available on magnetic tape. Enrollment breakdowns such as the number of students in special education categories were available from school district coded forms. Information contained on these forms was recorded, keypunched, edited and integrated into the data base. Totals available on magnetic tape were used to cross-check the accuracy of the coding and keying operations.

Enrollment data is presently available for school years 1974-75 and 1975-76. As data becomes available in succeeding years it will be added to the data base.

Financial Data File. This file contains school district financial information. Included at present are revenue sources, total expense budgets, functional expense accounting, and equalized property valuations. This data was made available by the School Finance and Auditing Department. As with the enrollment data, some data was available on magnetic tape. Other data was coded and keypunched, then verified by cross-checking with fields available on magnetic tape. The New Jersey School Boards Association provided the functional expense data.

Financial information is available for school years 1974-75 and 1975-76. As data for additional years becomes available it will be added to the data base.

Municipal Data File. Municipality based data was supplied by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. Available at present are property composition items for calendar years 1973 and 1974. Municipality based current expense budget breakdowns and property tax composition was also

supplied by the Department of Community Affairs on magnetic tape. This information is published in the Department's report "Thirty Seventh Annual Report of the Division of Local Government Services 1974".

Assessment Data. Authorization has been received to extract data on a confidential basis from the New Jersey Assessment Program data files. Information extracted will be at the school district level, and will be used for statistical purposes only. This information is available to users only with the permission of the New Jersey State Department of Education.

Use of the Data Base

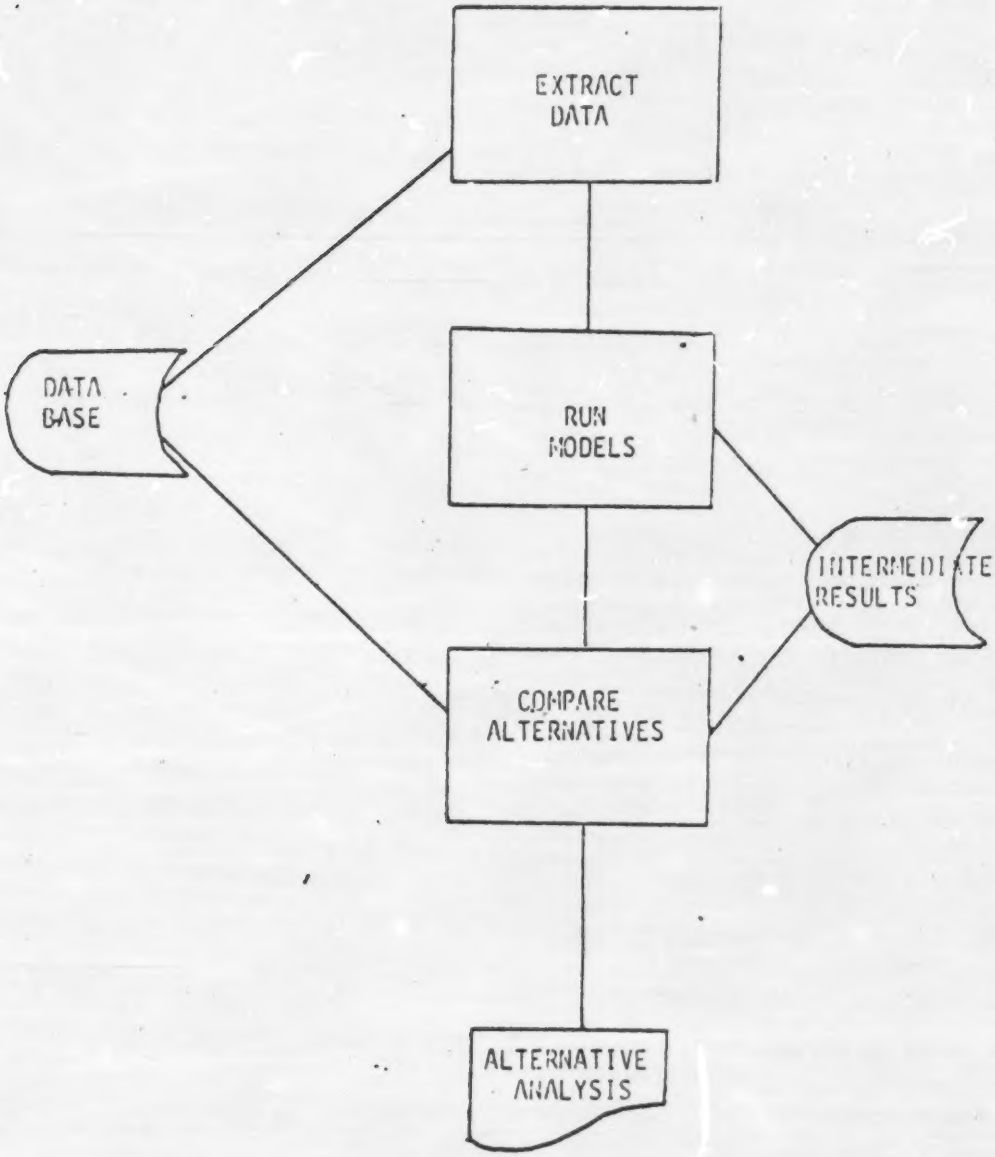
Figure II illustrates a methodology for analyzing school finance alternatives.

The first phase of any analysis of school finance alternatives is to extract the required data (represented by the box on the left in the figure). Data such as property valuations, expense budgets and enrollments are extracted. Then, school finance models are simulated to produce alternative allocations and these alternatives are stored on a district basis on intermediate files. Finally, programs which analyze alternatives are executed. At this point analytical variables may be extracted from the data base to determine the impact of each alternative in socioeconomic terms and to determine the "value" of each alternative.

As part of its ongoing research in the area of raising and distributing revenues for public education, computer programs have been developed to simulate school finance alternatives presented in response to Robinson v. Cahill. Specifically, state aid to each district as well as total state aid has been

FIG 5

USE OF THE DATA BASE



determined for the Bateman-Tanzman Act, Public Act of 1975, and the May 1975 Court order at various funding levels.

User Information

The New Jersey Education Data System is user oriented and is intended for the use of all interested parties who have policy questions, proposals for alternative allocation formulas or related research interests. All support services--data extraction, programming, utilization of statistical packages, writing of operating procedures, etc.--are handled by ETS staff. These support services enable persons unfamiliar with data processing to develop a research agenda and have ETS personnel process the request.

The New Jersey Education Data System has been assembled by the EPRI staff with the cooperation of numerous New Jersey education groups. The majority of the financial support was provided by a grant from the Ford Foundation and the Educational Testing Service. Although this support has defrayed initial development costs, maintenance and ongoing data activities also rely on user participation. Users access to the system is by contractural agreement with charges fixed at cost, after payment of an initial charge which is utilized for data base development.

A glossary of the elements in the New Jersey Education Data System follows.

For additional information contact Jay Moskowitz or Peg Goertz at EPRI's Princeton Office. (609) 921-9000, Ext. 2977.

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION DATA BASE ELEMENT DICTIONARY

DISTRICT AND MUNICIPALITY MASTER FILE
****

This file contains discriptive and indicative data about school districts and municipalities.

ELEMENT	DISCRIPTION
*******	**********
MDSTCTRL	District or municipality code number
MDSTNAME	District or municipality name
MDSTFLDM	Group of single character fields:
MDSTDITP	District type (I or II)
MDSTTRAN	Transition district indicator (0 or 1)
MDSTEQ73	1973 equalization district indicator -indicates this district received equalization aid in 1974-75
MDSTSAMP	Sample district indicator -to determine if this district belongs to EPRI sample
MDSTDIPN	District plan (1975 act) coded 1-5
MDSTSVHM	Save harmless data (Bateman):
MDSTFMSH	1972-73 min. and/or equalization aid
MDSTBLSH	1972-73 building aid
MDSTLOCD	NJ state legislative district codes -lists up to five legislative districts to which this school district belongs
MDSTMEMB	Constituent district codes -for a regional school district this field provides a list constituents
MDSTMEMO	District memberships -lists regional school district codes to which this district/municipality belongs

ASSESSMENT PROGRAM DATA FILE
****

This file contains New Jersey Assessment data for school years 1974-75 and 1975-76.

ASESDICD	District code number
ASESYRCD	Year code (identifies the data year, presently 1974-75 and 1975-76 data are available)
ASESASCD	Assessment program district code
ASESFLDA	Assessment fields:
ASESASCT	Community type (0-9)
ASESADFG	District factor grouping (a-k)
ASESPNCD	Percent of new children in district
ASESPTEN	Percent of tenth graders in:
ASESPBUS	Business or Commercial program
ASESPCPR	College Preparatory program
ASESPVOC	Vocational program
ASESPGEN	General program
ASESPNPR	Number not responding to this question
ASESNTET	Number responding to general info quests.
ASESNT04	Number responding grade 4
ASESNT07	Number responding grade 7
ASESNT10	Number responding grade 10
ASESNT12	Number responding grade 12

RESEARCH DATA FILE

This file contains analytical data at the school district level. Included are data extracted from the 1969-70 census and teacher data provided by the NJEA.

RESHDICD	District Code Number
RESHCNCD	Census district code
RESHMFIC	Median Family Income
RESHCPFM	Percent of children in poverty families
RESHPSEN	Public school enrollment total
RESHNPEN	Non-public school enrollment total
RESHALLP	Count of all persons
RESHETCP	Counts by ethnic group:
RESHWHIT	Count of white persons
RESHNEGR	Count of negro persons
RESHINDN	Count of all indian persons
RESHOTRC	Count of other races
RESHOTHR	Count of race indicated as other
RESHFAMS	Number of families
RESHPRS4	Professional staff data(74-75):
RESHTCHR	Count of teachers
RESHSSPL	Count of special services personnel
RESHADSV	Count of admin. and super. personnel
RESHTEX4	Teacher experience data (74-75):
RESHYRTH	Years teaching
RESHYRDI	Years in district
RESHSAL4	Teacher salary data (74-75):
RESHMEAN	Mean salary
RESHMEDN	Median salary
RESHhigs	Low salary
RESHlows	High salary

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION DATA BASE ELEMENT DICTIONARY

ENROLLMENT DATA FILE
****

This file contains enrollment data provided by the NJ Department of Education. Data are available at present for school years 1974-75 and 1975-75. Enrollment data are as of October 1 of each year.

ENRLDICD	District code number
ENRLYRCD	Year code (identifies the year of the data)
ENRLGRDI	Enrollment grade distribution:
ENRLGR01	Kindergarten
ENRLGR02	Grades 1-6
ENRLGR03	Grades 7-8
ENRLGR04	Grades 7-9, junior high school
ENRLGR05	Grades 10-12 senior high school
ENRLGR06	Grades 7-12 six year high school
ENRLGR07	Grades 9-12 four year high school
ENRLGR08	Post graduate and evening school
ENRLGR09	Vocational day
ENRLGR10	Shared time AVTS
ENRLGR11	Special classes
ENRLUNGR	Unweighted enrollment total
ENRLAFDC	AFDC pupil count
ENRLWTGR	Weighted enrollment total (bateman formula)
ENRLSPED	Special ed. enrollment public school:
ENRLSD01	Educable
ENRLSD02	Trainable
ENRLSD03	Neuroligically impaired
ENRLSD04	Perceptually impaired
ENRLSD05	Emotionally disturbed
ENRLSD06	Multiple handicapped
ENRLSD07	Socially maladjusted
ENRLSD08	Auditorially handicapped
ENRLSD09	Orthopedically handicapped
ENRLSD10	Chronically ill
ENRLSD11	Visually handicapped
ENRLSD12	Communication handicapped
ENRLSPEX	Special ed. enrollment private school:
ENRLSX01	Educable
ENRLSX02	Trainable
ENRLSX03	Neuroligically impaired
ENRLSX04	Perceptually impaired
ENRLSX05	Emotionally disturbed
ENRLSX06	Multiple handicapped

ENRLSX07	Socially maladjusted
ENRLSX08	Auditorially handicapped
ENRLSX09	Orthopedically handicapped
ENRLSX10	Chronically ill
ENRLSX11	Visually handicapped
ENRLSX12	Communication handicapped
ENRLSUPL	Supplementary services distribution:
ENRLSP01	Private school tuition
ENRLSP02	Home instruction
ENRLSP03	Supplementary
ENRLSP04	Bi-lingual
ENRLSP05	Compensatory
ENRLSP06	Local vocational
ENRLWTSP	Special education weighted total (weighted total of ENRLSPED, ENRLSPEX and ENRLSUPL. T & E weightings.)
ENRLESEN	Evening school enrollment

FINANCIAL DATA FILE
****

This file contains financial information for school districts provided by the NJ Department of Education. Data is available for school years 1974-75 and 1975-76.

FINDDICD	District code number
FINDYRCD	Year code (identifies data year)
FINDCEBD	Current expense total budget
FINDREVI	Current expense revenue items:
FINDRBAL	Balance appropriated
FINDRTUI	Tuition revenue
FINDRMIS	Miscellaneous revenue
FINDRFED	Federal aid
FINDRTRN	Transportation state aid
FINDRATP	Atypical pupil state aid
FINDRLEN	Law enforcement state aid
FINDROTH	Other state aid
FINDCPOT	Capital outlay items:
FINDCLTY	Local property tax levy for capital
FINDCSTD	Capital outlay state aid
FINDCFED	Capital outlay federal aid
FINDCPTT	Total capital outlay
FINDDBSV	Debt service items:
FINDDLTY	Local property levy for debt
FINDDSTD	debt service state aid
FINDABBA	Additional building aid
FINDDTOT	Total debt (not incl FINDABBA)
FINDEQVL	Equalized property valuation
FINDRECP	Recap items minimum/equalization aid
FINDMNEQ	Min. and/or equalization aid
FINDNTUS	Save harmless paid(74 record) Total state aid paid (75 record)
FINDLTLY	Local tax levy- current expense
FINDBTDT	Other Education Data system(EDS) items:
FINDB100	100% approved transportation
FINDBESE	Evening school enrollment
FINDBTTR	Total Budgeted Transportation

FINDADM	Administration Costs
FINDASAL	Administration Salaries
FINDAOTH	Other Administration Costs
FINDINS	Instructional Costs
FINDISAL	Teacher's Salaries
FINDTEXT	Textbooks
FINDLIBA	Library & Audio Visual
FINDTSUP	Teaching Supplies
FINDTOTH	Other Teaching Expenses
FINDATT	Attendance
FINDHEA	Health Services
FINDHSAL	Health Salaries
FINDHOTH	Other Health Expenses
FINDPLU	Plant Operation & Utilities
FINDPSAL	Plant Operation Salaries
FINDHEAT	Heat
FINDUTIL	Utilities
FINDMAI	Maintenance & Equipment
FINDMSAL	Maintenance Salaries
FINDREQP	Replacing Equipment
FINDNEQP	New Equipment
FINDFIX	Fixed Charges
FINDRTIR	Employee Retirement
FINDOEX	Other Expenses

MUNICIPAL DATA FILE
****

MUNICIPAL DATA IS AVAILABLE FOR MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS. REGIONAL SCHOOL DATA REPRESENTS AN AGGREGATION OF CONSTITUENT MUNICIPALITY DATA. THIS DATA WAS PROVIDED BY THE NJ DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS. NOTE DATA IN THIS FILE IS BASED ON A CALENDAR YEAR.

MUNIDICD	District code number
MUNIPRC3	Property composition items 1973:
MUNIPR01	Vacant land %
MUNIPR02	Residential land %
MUNIPR03	Farmland %
MUNIPR4A	Commercial land %
MUNIPR4B	Industrial land %
MUNIPR4C	Apartments %
MUNIPRBS	Property valuation
MUNIPRC4	Property composition items 1974:
MUNIPR01	Vacant land %
MUNIPR02	Residential land %
MUNIPR03	Farmland %
MUNIPR4A	Commercial land %
MUNIPR4B	Industrial land %
MUNIPR4C	Apartments %
MUNIPRBS	Property valuation
MUNIPOP4	1974 estimated population
MUNICACD	Community affairs comunity code
MUNIFGOV	Form of government
MUNICEX4	Current expenditures 1974:
MUNIGENG	General government
MUNIJUDC	Judiciary
MUNIPBSF	Public safety
MUNIPBWK	Public works
MUNIHEAL	Health
MUNIWELF	Welfare
MUNIRCCN	Recreation and conservation
MUNIEDUX	Education (excluding schools)
MUNIOTHE	Other munnicipal expenditures
MUNIUNDE	Not used
MUNIOEX4	Other expenditures 1974:
MUNIDEBT	Debt service
MUNISCST	School county special district

MUNIOTHR	Other
MUNITEX4	Total expenditures
MUNIREV4	Revenues realized 1974:
MUNIPRTX	Property tax
MUNIBUPR	Business personalty tax
MUNIPUTT	Taxes from public utilities
MUNISTAD	State aid
MUNIFEDR	Federal aid
MUNIOTHR	Other
MUNICPT4	Capital outlay 1974
MUNIGDL4	Gross debt level 1974
MUNINDL4	Net debt level 1974
MUNITAX4	Property tax composition 1974:
MUNILDST	Local district school
MUNIRGST	Regional district school
MUNISTMB	School taxes in municipal budget
MUNICNTY	County
MUNICNTL	County library
MUNILMPT	Local municipal purpose
MUNIVSCT	Veteran and senior citizen
MUNITTRC	Total for rate computation
MUNITLVA	Total taxes levied abstract
MUNIEVL4	Equalized valuation 1974
MUNIERAT	State equalization ratio